



Congregation Ahavath Sholom

The Creative Spirit Dwells Here

THE CAS NEWSLETTER

January 2025

Upcoming services and events

Friday, January 3 at 5:00 PM: Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

Saturday, January 4 at 10:00 AM: Shabbat Morning Service with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

Wednesday, January 8 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Monday, January 13 at 5:00 PM: CAS Board Meeting via Zoom

Wednesday, January 15 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Friday, January 17 at 5:00 PM: Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

Saturday, January 18 at 10:00 AM: Shabbat Study with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

Monday, January 20 at 12:00 Noon: Memoir Workshop with Barbara Janoff via Zoom

7:00 PM: Photography Workshop with Arthur Hillman via Zoom

Wednesday, January 22 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Sunday, January 26 at 1:00 PM: Still Life painting workshop with Ilene Spiewak

Wednesday, January 29 at 10:00 AM: Café Kehillah with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin via Zoom

Friday, January 31 at 5:00 PM: Kabbalat Shabbat with Rabbi Jennifer Rudin

Note: Unless indicated, all services & events take place at the synagogue at 15 North Street, Great Barrington

This month's newsletter features:

An invitation to all...

January Still Life Painting Workshop with Ilene Spiewak

"Widow's Log," a series of writings by Barbara Janoff

"Kristallnacht" by Barbara Barron accepted for New York collection

"Assembled," Mad Rose Gallery exhibit with works by Arthur Hillman

January Creative Arts Workshops

January Yahrzeits

January Donations

Advertisers and Sponsors

An invitation to all...

You are Invited...



to celebrate a year of community, prayer, change and joy at Ahavath Sholom. This past year, 2024, has seen uplifting religious services, warm and inclusive social events, fascinating cultural and educational programs, changes in our rabbinical staff and a revitalized forward-looking congregation.

Please support our congregation in whatever way you can: a single donation or a pledge for continued donation through the year. And, though we refuse to believe we are getting older, consider CAS in your estate planning. You can donate on our website or send your check to CAS, which is much preferred.

Thank you and looking forward to celebrating and sharing our community in 2025!

January Still Life Painting Workshop with Ilene Spiewak

Ilene Spiewak, painter, educator, and art therapist will offer a studio painting workshop on Sunday, January 26, 2025, from 1:00 - 3:00, upstairs at CAS.

“Things are whatever we imagine them to be. Engage yourself and your color sense in an intimate conversation. Sting your senses and charge your paints with energy!”

Come join us and make your very own still-life masterpiece. All levels of art enthusiasts are welcome! The workshop is limited to twelve painters. The cost, which includes all materials and supplies, is \$75. Pre-registration is required: email casoffice15@gmail.com.





“Widow’s Log,” a series of writings by Barbara Janoff

When a friend of mine was widowed recently, I found myself thinking that she might appreciate reading a blog I wrote after the death of my husband, Al Silverstein. I had all but forgotten about it, having finished with it ten years ago. The entries are mostly from 2010 to 2015, starting three years after Al died. I had benefited from reading about the experiences of other widows and thought I might add to the literature. Plus, writing helped me make sense of my new life and new identity.

Rereading some of the entries now, I’m struck by the changes in myself and my life that I never could have anticipated all those years before. I’d forgotten so much of those times, the small details that make up one’s life. An older cousin once told me she’d forgotten whole years of her past; she’d been either too busy or bored to take note.

To me, memoir writing is a way to treasure our moments—their mysteries and gifts and trials—and an opportunity to share with others, if we can. A way to say *you’re not alone. This is how I got through.*

[Barbara Janoff leads the very successful online CAS Memoir Workshop.]

Waking (12/14/2010)

I woke this morning full of doubts about this blog. *Who wants to read about widowhood? About death? Do you really want to be the one who writes the bad news? Do you really want to write at all? Just go back to sleep,* soothed the voice that kills dreams.

I’ve slept enough already. I know how short life is and how suddenly it can end. I want to figure out the hand I’ve been dealt and what it means to me. When I’m taken out, I want to go knowing that I decided to face my life and the deaths within my life. I want to know that I tried, anyway. That I didn’t let myself down by staying in bed and turning on the television as soon as I opened my eyes in the morning just to drown out my own thoughts. I’ve been doing that since Al died to keep away—what? Loneliness? Is loneliness *that* bad? I think it’s something more that I’ve been holding at arm’s length. The something contained in the word “loneliness,” that I can only glean from the sounds that make it up. That long O, eternally startled and mournful—*Oh! Where’d everybody go?* But also the two Ls in the word that remind me of children singing and of being sung to—those childhood lullabies that lulled and swaddled.

What I’ve been avoiding is the awful feeling, harsh and grating, that doesn’t stop. The naked longing and vulnerability of having no control and no power. I held those feelings at arm’s length all during the eighteen months that Al and I fought his lung cancer. Together we held off exhaustion, despair, terror, and doubt. But now I’m alone with all of those feelings, and I can’t hold them off anymore.

Loneliness doesn’t even begin to explain it. It’s less word than sound. It’s like the cry a hawk makes, piercing the very air that holds it up. An alien, animal sound is what I would have said before Al died, but afterwards I identified with that cry. It bridged the gap between human and beast, between me and every mortal thing.

Anyway that’s what it seemed like when I came home from the hospital that last time. A hawk was nearby, very near, which isn’t unusual up in the Taconic Hills, but this one wouldn’t stop screeching. It screeched and screeched every time I went outside to walk our dog, Star. I had to cover my ears with my hands, the screeching was so loud. I couldn’t understand why Star seemed so unperturbed. She didn’t seem to hear it. She had been his. I expected her to be frantic, look everywhere for him and run from place to place with a lost look on her face, like she used to do when she had dozed off while he went into another room. But no, as we walked, she kept her nose to the ground, sniffing every other blade of grass and stone as if it were an ordinary day. With Al gone, she became my buddy, such a calm transfer of loyalty.

I also couldn’t understand why, as we walked on our country road, my neighbors weren’t running out of their houses to see what on earth all the racket was up in the sky. But no one seemed to notice. No one on the road seemed home at all. It was deserted. Just Star, the hawk, and I. Strange, although it looked like my road, it felt different, like an old faded painting. A still life minus one dimension, flat and dull, where I now dwelled, having become flat and dull myself without Al.

But that red tailed hawk was anything but dull. His cries pierced through the fog of my surroundings and pierced through me too. It cried for two days and nights like that. Sometimes I even heard it when I was inside, through the drone of fans and music and television voices, and every time we went outside in the dusty green of that hot August, its voice followed Star and me through the trees and down the road.

I still couldn’t cry back then. To say the truth, I was feeling calm—relieved—no longer in a constant state of emergency, no longer on hyper-alert status, no longer trying to save each next minute of Al’s life. I was numb, which I suppose accounted for the dullness of everything around me.

That hawk hung around for two days, and then, as suddenly as it had come, it left. I’ve seen many hawks around my house since that time. Some have even cried out as they flew by. But none have kept a constant crying vigil, night and day, day and night, as that hawk did when Al died.

"Kristallnacht" by Barbara Barron accepted by New York collection

The Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County has accepted "Kristallnacht" by Barbara Barron for their collection.

The art quilt was created for an event sponsored by Congregation Ahavath Shalom Synagogue of Great Barrington, MA. It was displayed on November 9, 2011, the 73rd anniversary of Kristallnacht at Shakespeare & Co in Lenox.

The piece depicts "The Night of Broken Glass." Dupioni silks, hand-dyed batik fabrics and lucite were utilized. The technique employed was Applique Machine Embroidery.



“Assembled,” Mad Rose Gallery exhibit with works by Arthur Hillman



ASSEMBLED

Structures, photographs, drawings, ceramics and fiber arts. Featuring the works of **Karen Dolmanisth, Michael Flower, Emily Fuller, Arthur Hillman, Bruce Panock** and **Kim Saul**.

Join us for the opening reception on **January 18th, from 3 PM to 6 PM**, for an inspiring and intimate evening celebrating art and creativity. This is your chance to meet the talented artists behind the works on display, hear their stories, and gain unique insights into their creative processes. Engage in meaningful conversations with the creators, learn what inspires their artistry, and discover the intricate details and emotions behind each piece. Experience the artwork up close in an inviting, relaxed atmosphere. Don't miss this special opportunity to connect with the work.

Gallery Open **Thursday - Sunday, Noon-5PM, Sat until 6PM.**



January Creative Arts Workshops

The next Memoir Writing Workshop is tentatively scheduled for Monday, January 20th at noon. Shared readings and short writing exercises. Each of these sessions is stand-alone. Please RSVP to Barbara Janoff at bjanoff1@gmail.com. Suggested donation to CAS is \$10 to support our Creative Arts Programs.

Barbara Janoff Ph.D. is retired from the Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York in Manhattan, where she taught writing and literature. Her poetry and essays have appeared in a number of journals, including Communication Arts, Women's Work: The Journal of the Columbia College Women's Center and the Berkshire Review.



Photograph by Andrew Neel on Unsplash

The next Photography Workshop will also take place on Monday, January 20th, but at 7:00 p.m. Participants in the workshop can submit any images they would like discussed, regardless of subject matter or content, using phone or camera. They can also share their screen with the group. These workshops are stand-alone sessions, open to all. Please RSVP to arthurhillman54@gmail.com. Suggested donation to CAS is \$10 to support our Creative Arts Programs.

Photographer and printmaker Arthur Hillman has been exhibiting his prints for more than 60 years. He has delivered a variety of lectures and presentations on photography and printmaking, juried many exhibits, and was a founding member of the Berkshire Photography Group. He is Professor Emeritus, Photography, Printmaking and Design, Bard College at Simon's Rock.



Photograph by Michele Waldman from the CAS Photography Workshop

January Yahrzeits

“Much of our experience of divine goodness, grace and love has come to us through those whose lives have touched our own.”

	Hebrew Date	Gregorian Date	This year's date
Louis Kassler	Tevet 02 5751	12/19/1990	1/2
Sylvia Barth	Tevet 02 5759	12/21/1998	1/2
Sonya Richter	Tevet 03 5751	12/20/1990	1/3
Fannie Radin	Tevet 06 5729	12/27/1968	1/6
Gertrude Schrager	Tevet 09 5758	1/7/1998	1/9
Burton Elliott	Tevet 09 5774	12/12/2013	1/9
Solomon Brook	Tevet 13	12/25/2023	1/13
Leonard Traines	Tevet 15 5784	12/27/2023	1/15
Rose London Orenstein	Tevet 23 5731	1/20/1971	1/23
Bella Axelrod	Tevet 25 5721	1/13/1961	1/25
Robert Scheinmann	Tevet 25 5729	1/15/1969	1/25
Louis C. Lasker	Tevet 25 5742	1/20/1982	1/25
Hy Radin	Tevet 27 5755	12/30/1994	1/27
Rhoda W. Lasker	Tevet 27 5747	1/28/1987	1/27
Rabbi Jacob Axelrod	Tevet 28 5746	1/9/1986	1/28
Arthur John Rothstein	Tevet 29 5752	1/5/1992	1/29
Herbert Budnick	Tevet 29 5774	1/1/2014	1/29

January Donations

To honor the memory of Rabbi Rudin's father

Thomas and Susan Hicks

Year End Donations

Lisa and Eric Chamberlain

The Elias-Saed Family

Sandra and Bill Flannery

Helen and Henry Freedman

Karen Chase and Paul Graubard

Nettie Hammond

Thomas and Susan Hicks

Jamie Horwitz (Happy Hanukkah!)

In support of the Creative Arts Workshops

Caroline Forsman (Memoir and Photography Workshops)

Bruce Frishkoff (Memoir Workshop)

Arthur Hillman (Memoir Workshop)

Barbara Janoff (Photography Workshop)

Linda Josepfs (Memoir Workshop)

Carol Killian (Memoir Workshop)

Marie Rudden (Memoir Workshop)

Michele Waldman (Photography Workshop)

Memorial Board

Nettie Hammond

New sconces for the sanctuary

Lisa and Eric Chamberlain

Maintenance, Repair and Renovation Fund

Karen and Chuck Schader

Electrical systems renovation for the building

Melvin and Hilda Katsh Family Trust

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